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## ABSTRACT

The success of Native adult education and vocational training programs is linked to the economic health of Native communities. Reports since 1923 document the failure of Federal Government programs in producing educated Native adults and the inadequacy of adult education delivery systems. An array of federal legislation has attempted to increase educational and vocational opportunities for Native adults. The Adult Education Act and the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act provide funds to the states to operate adult educational and vocational training programs. Direct funding is provided to Native communities for program development by the Indian Education Act, the Indian and Hawaiian Natives Vocational Education Program, the Joint Training Partnership Act, the Family Support Act, and several Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) programs. However, both the BIA and the Department of Education appear caught between serving the needs of Native communities and giving way to federal demands to reduce expenditures. In addition, neither agency has been able to resolve issues of sovereignty and self-determination with the tribal governments that they serve. Recommendations include the development of a national database on Native demographic data, changing the Indian Priority System to ensure consultation with Native governments, the development of model Native adult education programs, funding and technical assistance for tribal education departments, requiring the BIA to comply with federal law on funding of Native vocational education, and reworking the Indian Education Act grant formula. This paper contains 20 references. (SV)

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# American Indian and Alaska Native Adult Education and Vocational Training Programs: Historical Beginnings, Present Conditions and Future Directions

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## Introduction

There is a growing consensus that the success of Native adult education and vocational training programs is tied to the economic health of Native communities. Problems of illiteracy and unemployment are interrelated and cannot be solved in isolation. They are simply symptoms of the same illness — poverty. One begets the other creating an unending cycle of despair that robs Native families, communities and governments of their culture, traditions and dignity. No single agency or legislative initiative has the power to alter the situation. Reform will occur only after tribal, state and federal agencies combine resources to stimulate Native economies and provide adequate funds for the operation of adult training and education programs. Such a multi-frontal assault will improve employment opportunities, inspire Native adults to obtain employment skills and provide Native governments and enterprises with a better educated work force. All of which will move Native communities further down the road to self-determination.

This paper will survey the historical relationship between the United States Government and Native communities that led to the development of Native adult basic education and vocational training programs. Through government and private reports spanning more than 150 years, it will document the often tragic consequences of that relationship. It will go on to identify current federal, state and Native programs designed to overcome past and present failures, and it will provide specific recommendations for change voiced by Native community leaders, educators, and parents at meetings held by the Indian Nations At Risk Task Force. But prior to that I want to relay the story of William "Billy" Mastaw, a 35-year-old Chippewa from a small reservation in Michigan's rural Upper Peninsula.

Billy obtained a high school equivalency diploma in June 1990 from the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians' federally funded Adult

Learning Center. Three years earlier, he came to the Center after the Michigan Department of Social Services refused to continue his general assistance payments unless he enrolled in an adult education program.

Billy did not like the idea that he was again being forced to attend school. He thought he had rid himself of that annoyance 14 years ago when he left the public school system in the ninth grade. But if Billy could have looked past his distaste over the referral, he would have seen that not all was well with his life. His days were filled with long stretches of nothing to do. He did not have a job or a car. He had no one to share his thoughts, his needs and his desires. He was bored and he was lonely, and he often felt out of place. And when things got really bad, Billy got drunk. Since leaving school he had developed a nasty drug and alcohol habit, experienced one failed marriage, spent small stretches of time in jail and been unemployed or underemployed most of his adult life. Lacking a permanent address, he often spent nights sleeping on the living room couch of his brother's or some friend's home.

The Center's diagnostic testing program placed Billy at an eighth grade level for reading, mathematics and English. Based on his past experience within educational institutions, his irritation over the forced referral, and his on-going substance abuse, graduation was not part of his expectations. The first night he attended the program, he walked into the classroom, sat at a desk, pulled out a pencil and glared at the teacher and fellow students. He was ready to suffer the program until his case worker turned attention to another client, allowing Billy to walk away unnoticed.

Billy's attitude began to change after he picked up on the differences between the Center and the public school he had left years ago. For the first time he was not the only dark face in the crowd. At the Center he was not the only student from the reservation — he was part of a majority. No war hoops or Indian jokes were likely to come from this crowd — he knew the other students; he had grown

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up along side many of them. He knew their parents, had hung around with some of their brothers, and had dated some of their sisters. They dressed like him. They talked like him. Most had enrolled at the Center because they had encountered problems at the public school — just like him. The teachers were also different. It wasn't that they were any more caring than those he had encountered before, but they were more patient, more understanding. They allowed him to work at his own pace. The teachers talked to him about the future and the possibilities that would open after he obtained a high school equivalency diploma. He began to like the idea of being a student and looked forward to each class.

After taking and passing his first General Education Development (GED) test, Billy gained confidence in his ability to succeed. He became motivated. He joined a tribal substance abuse prevention program. His school attendance increased. During the next two years he studied hard and passed all five GED tests. He then enrolled in a two-year Indian community college (Bay Mills Community College), and as of this writing he has completed the first year of a two-year business degree. Billy's success is far from complete. In order to fully leave his past behind, he must complete his college education, maintain his sobriety, and obtain self-sustaining employment. Difficult enough for anyone to achieve, these goals are more elusive for someone who was raised in a dysfunctional and often traumatic environment, and who continues to reside in a community shattered from the effects of a broken culture.

Large segments of America's Native communities are adrift, like Billy, in a world in which they can not compete. Native adults and children within these communities are at risk. At stake is the quality of life for current and future generations of American Indian and Alaska Natives. Education and training programs must be tied to employment opportunities. Otherwise Native adults will continue to base their future expectations on the past realities of meaningless, low paying employment. It is my hope that this paper will motivate policy makers to investigate more deeply into the harsh realities facing Native people. Such exploration will surely uncover new strategies to stimulate Native economies and to better educational services — putting an end to the tragic plight of America's Native communities.

## Historical Beginnings

Standing before the August 20, 1990, hearing of the Indian Nations At Risk Task Force in Billings, Montana, a Native educator stated: *"As In-*

*dian people...we work with [the] dream and [the] goal that some day our tribal members will become self-sufficient, using education as a tool to achieve...Indian self-determination.*"<sup>170</sup> (INAR Task Force Hearing, Billings, MT, Baily, 90, p. 1) The task force had heard the statement before, rephrased and retold, by Native community leaders, teachers, and parents at similar hearings across the country.

In Seattle, Washington, Henry Deleve Chaiaie, director of adult education for the United Indians of All Tribes Foundation stated: *"Many adults come into our [program]...because they want to change their circumstances...these people are coming in from alcohol and drug treatment centers...we show them how they can be successful.*"<sup>170</sup> (INAR Task Force Hearing, 90)

In Juneau, Alaska, Sandy Armstrong, director of education for the Fairbanks Native Association stated that teachers of Natives should work to gain the trust of Native students by telling them that: *"You are no longer invisible. I can see you. I see your value and your potential. I see your problems. I care.*"<sup>170</sup> (INAR Task Force Hearing, 90)

At similar hearings in Minnesota, Arizona, North Carolina and California, others spoke with anger, frustration and concern and added their voices to the chorus of voices that have declared Native adult and vocational education a failure. The extent of that failure has been documented as far back as 1923 when Secretary of the Interior Hubert Work appointed the **Committee of One Hundred** to quell public indignation over a plan to divest the Rio Grand Pueblos of land (Dennis, 1977, p. 52). The Committee was mainly concerned with the health and sanitation of medical facilities serving Native communities, but it also reported, circuitously, that educators serving Native communities were not competent, and that Native school facilities were inadequate. The committee requested additional federal appropriations to rectify the situation (Fey, 1970, p. 131).

The report spurred the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to push for higher enrollment of Native children in public, non-reservation schools, and to revise the curriculum of federal Native schools to match more closely the offerings of the public school system. Reservation day schools were extended to include sixth grade, and nonreservation boarding school curriculum was expanded to include high school courses. The report focused public debate, and for the first time the majority of a national symposium publicly deplored accepted efforts to destroy Native culture.

Five years later, the **Meriam Associates Report** (1928) refined the debate as it examined



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the economic, social, and educational conditions of Native Americans. The report noted that the greatest need involving Native education was a *change in point of view*. It promoted a strengthening of the Native family and social structure, and it criticized the boarding school system that separated students from parents. It identified and denounced ineffective teaching methods, dilapidated housing facilities, and staff cruelties to students. It questioned the judgement of allowing a Washington office to prescribe uniform courses of study and examination when there was an obvious need to develop classroom curriculum to fit the abilities, interests and goals of the reservation bound Natives.

The report addressed adult education by candidly stating that family education was a means of bettering the existence of Native people, and it recommended that Native day schools be designed as community centers for reaching Native adults as well as children. It noted that "a genuine education program will have to comprise the adults of the community as well as the children" (Meriam Associates Report, 1928, p. 349).

From the 1930s on, the federal government struggled to determine the best method of providing educational services to Native communities. Mindful of the growing awareness that the destruction of Native culture and traditions brought little but despair and frustration to Native communities, the federal government enacted a series of policies that, for a short time, appeared to benefit Native communities. The boarding school concept was rethought. Additional day schools were built to allow a greater number of Native children to remain at home with their families. Qualified education personnel were sought to instruct at Native schools, bilingual education was introduced, curriculum was adjusted to include cultural programs, and more pertinent vocational training programs were instituted. To compensate states for the cost of Native education, the Johnson O'Malley Act was passed in 1934. Educational and technical vocational programs were still not offered, to a great degree, to Native adults; there was, however, a growing appreciation for the adult's role in motivating Native children to attend school.

John Collier, Commissioner of Indian Affairs during this period, was responsible for the closing of 16 boarding schools and the opening of 84 day schools. Collier also started programs in adult education, training of Native instructors and inservice teacher training (Kennedy Report, 1969, p. 13).

The humane policies toward Native communities would end in the 1940s. Once again, policies of termination and assimilation would be enacted by the federal government as a *"final solution of the Indian problem."* In 1944 a House Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs reported that *"the goal of Indian education should be to make the Indian child a better American, rather than equip him simply to be a better Indian."*<sup>170</sup> As a result, the progressive agendas put forth by the Committee of One Hundred, The Meriam Associates Report, and Commissioner Collier were ignored. Reservation day schools were closed, forcing Native children into boarding schools far from their parents and homes. In 1952 all Native schools in Wisconsin, Washington, Michigan, and Idaho were closed, pushing Native children into unprepared public school systems.

The goal of this period, according to the Kennedy Report, was to *"get rid of Indians and Indian trust land by terminating federal recognition and relocating Indians into cities off the reservation."*<sup>170</sup> The termination period was capped with the enactment of Public Law 280 which transferred federal jurisdiction of many Native communities to individual states and the passage of House Concurrent Resolution 108 which called for an end of federal services to Native communities. Public Law 280 was later modified by the Indian Civil Rights Act of 1968 which required states to gain the permission of Native Communities prior to the transfer of jurisdiction. In 1988 the House withdrew Concurrent Resolution 108.

In 1969 a Congressional study entitled **Indian Education: A National Tragedy — A National Challenge** (US Senate, 1969) was published. Commonly referred to as the **Kennedy Report**, the study echoed the findings of the Meriam Report, but grabbed the nation's attention with its thoroughness and style of presentation. The study revealed that: Native dropout rates were twice the national average; some school districts had dropout rates approaching 100 percent; achievement levels of Native children were 2-to-3 years below those of white students; Native children fall progressively further behind the longer they stay in school; only 1 percent of Native children in elementary school had Native teachers; and Native children, more than any other minority group, believe themselves to be below average in intelligence (Kennedy Report, 1969, p. IX).

The statistics revealed the need to overhaul Native education programs and prompted the authors of the report to publicly exclaim the failure of federal Native policies: *"These cold (statistics mark a stain on our national conscience, a stain*

which has spread slowly for a hundred years.<sup>170</sup> The authors concluded that national policies for educating Native people were a *'failure of major proportions.'*<sup>170</sup>

The result of that failure was the large numbers of under educated Native adults. The Kennedy report, more than any other report up to that time, focused attention on the problems of Native literacy, adult education and vocational training. It revealed that possibly 75,000 Native adults were not functionally literate; less than one-fifth of the Native adult population had completed high school or its equivalent. Functional illiteracy and a lack of high school graduates were cited as a major cause of the severe poverty on Native reservations and the failure of Native children in school. The study determined that the BIA's adult education and vocational training programs were barely scratching the surface of these problems. Senator Edward M. Kennedy, subcommittee chairman, punctuated the findings with comments that revealed his shock and anger at what the committee had found: *"These cold statistics illuminate a national tragedy and a national disgrace. They demonstrate that the 'first American' has become the 'last American' in terms of opportunity for employment, education, a decent income, and the chance for a full and rewarding life."*<sup>170</sup>

The report put forth 60 recommendations and goals that the authors felt, if enacted, would better the state of Native education. Four of those recommendations directly affect adult and vocational education:

1. That adult illiteracy in Native Communities be eliminated;
2. That adult high school equivalency programs for all Native adults be established;
3. That an exemplary program of adult education be developed which will provide:
  - a. Basic literacy opportunities to all non-literate Native adults. The goal should be to wipe out illiteracy.
  - b. Opportunities to all Native adults to qualify for a high school equivalency certificate. The goal should be to provide all interested Indian adults with high school equivalency in the shortest period of time feasible.
  - c. A major research and development program to develop more innovative and effective techniques for achieving the literacy and high school equivalency goals.
  - d. That adult education programs be placed under Native control.

4. That there be a thorough review of the vocational educational and manpower programs in the BIA. The review would be conducted by an independent group of experts; the study should include Native parents and tribal leaders, and explore economic opportunities available on reservations for those Natives who may wish to stay on the reservation; vocational training programs should be closely articulated with economic development programs on reservations.

The report challenged the federal government to renew its commitment to Native communities. It called for *"legislative changes; administrative changes; policy changes; structural changes — all of which are geared to making Indian education programs into models of excellence."*<sup>170</sup> And, perhaps most importantly, the report called for a reconsideration of the Miriam Report recommendations of Native control over Native education programs.

The Kennedy Report proved to be an effectual document. One year later, President Richard M. Nixon's 1970 message to Congress stated: *"...it is long past time that Indian policies of the federal government began to recognize and build upon the capacities and insights of the Indian people...we must begin to act on the basis of what the Indians themselves have long been telling us."*

Nixon recommended that Native communities assume control and operation of federally funded Native education programs. He pushed for the development of the National Advisory Council on Indian Opportunity, composed of Native educators. The Council's mandate was to provide technical assistance to communities seeking to establish local control of educational programs and tribal schools, to conduct a nationwide assessment of the educational status of all Native children, and to evaluate and report to Congress on the progress of local control and the educational progress of Native children.

The events of the time also influenced the development and passage of the Indian Education Act of 1972. The Act, first referred to as Title IV, now Title V, obligates the majority of its funds to school districts with significant Native populations to develop culturally based education programs. It requires the participation of Native parents in the design, development, and evaluation of all Native education programs funded by the Act, and it promoted the hiring of Native teachers, counselors, tutors and other para-professionals within the school district. Subpart 2 and 3 of the Act provides funds to Native communities, organizations, and

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institutions for the development of Native conceived and controlled primary, secondary and adult education programs. These funds, however, are competitive and have never reached the level needed to meet the educational needs of Native communities. The Act also provides discretionary funds to public colleges and universities to train Native teachers.

An important, and often controversial, result of IEA was its broad definition of American Indian and Alaska Natives. The Act defined "Indian" as members and their descendants in the first or second degree of federally recognized and terminated tribes, bands, and groups. The definition was meant to include all Natives. Some federally recognized Native communities protested the all-encompassing definition and challenged the authenticity of many of the "Natives" served by the Act. The controversy exists today, despite federal efforts to establish Native identity through the completion of federal forms that have to be signed by Native governments. The Act also established the Office of Indian Education (OIE) within the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (now the U.S. Department of Education), and the National Advisory Council on Indian Education.

The Indian Education Act was followed by the passage of the "Indian Vocational Program" contained within the reauthorization language of what became the Carl Perkins Vocational Education Act (Public Law 98-524). Congressmen Albert Quie (R., Minnesota) and Michael Blouin (D., Iowa) sponsored the then one-percent, set-aside program. The set aside was to be matched by the BIA — this has never occurred as the BIA has continually and successfully obtained Congressional waivers relieving it of its matching mandate. The Act was reauthorized in 1990 (Public Law 101-392), and the set-aside for Native programs increased to 1.25 percent of the total appropriation, with 0.25 percent going to Hawaiian Natives.

The renamed Indian and Hawaiian Natives Vocational Education Program was designed to provide Native communities, organizations, and colleges with funds to develop a wide range of vocational training programs that lead to the employment of tribal members. From 1977 to 1989 some 638 Native communities and organizations applied through the competitive application process for funding. Of these applications, 409 were funded, for a total funding level of \$79.7 million. According to the U.S. Department of Education, approximately 5,000 Natives a year were served by these programs.

Three important studies have examined the impact of such federal efforts as the Indian Educa-

tion Act, the Indian and Hawaiian Natives Vocational Education Program, and the BIA to provide Native communities with better educational services.

In 1977 a ground breaking research study entitled **Literacy and Education Among Adult Indians in Oklahoma** (Hall and Hackbert, 1977) reported on the education attainment levels of Natives within the state of Oklahoma. Study findings included:

- Of the 63,490 Native adults residing in the state, more than 51 percent had not completed high school, and 22 percent had not completed 8th grade.
- 56 percent of the Native adult population could be deemed functionally illiterate in one or more of the basic knowledge or skill areas.
- 42.8 percent lacked the skills necessary to fully participate within modern American society.
- 63 percent were not able to perform basic mathematical functions, while another 17 percent had only marginal math skills.
- 62 percent did not fully possess the skills required to adequately respond to health problems.

The study contrasted the abilities of Natives to better their existence against the complexity of contemporary America and found a very large number of Oklahoma Native adults to be at risk of failure. It recommended that educational programs be developed to upgrade Native survival skills needed to cope with the day-to-day situations involving commerce and health.

In 1981 the **Status of Educational Attainment and Performance of Adult American Indians and Alaska Natives** (Brod and McQuiston, 1977) was released. The nationwide study was funded by the United States Department of Education Office of Indian Education to conduct a basic survey to ascertain the extent of the educational problems among Native adults. The comprehensive study took four years to complete; it gathered detailed information in such areas as the individual's life history, social condition and conducted academic performance level testing through a sixteen page questionnaire completed by some four thousand randomly selected adult Natives. The study also surveyed community, state and federally supported adult education programs to determine their ability to aid adult Natives and to evaluate Native participation and success levels within those programs. Major findings included:



- The median education of Native Americans is more than two years lower than that found among Caucasians.
- Native performance on the Adult Performance Level examination was far below those of non-Natives on the traditional reading, writing, computation and economic scales; Native adults averaged 52 percent compared to a national norm in the 80s.
- 43 percent of the Native adult population had not obtained a high school diploma or its equivalent.
- Unemployment, underemployment and other symbols of a disadvantaged population are the rule rather than the exception among Native adults.

The study reported that one-third of all Native adults were dissatisfied with the education they received; more than three-quarters would have liked more education; two-thirds felt they had received an inappropriate education, preventing them from obtaining the type of occupations they desired and achieving the lives they wanted to lead.

The survey of state sponsored adult education programs revealed the following:

- Few SEAs were able to provide data concerning participation and success rates of adult Natives within their programs.
- 44 percent reported difficulties resulting from inadequate recruitment linkages to Native communities.
- 36 percent lacked an identifiable community from which to recruit Native participants.
- 33 percent lacked trained staff to deal with the special problems of adult Natives.
- 28 percent reported transportation problems.
- 23 percent cited child care problems.
- 21 percent stated problems with cultural incompatibility.

Survey results from Indian Education Act funded tribal programs determined that sixty percent of their participants were unemployed; forty percent lived in substandard housing; twenty-five percent had educational achievement levels below the eighth grade; thirty-two percent were in need of transportation. Most participants ranged from 16-to-34 years old.

Study recommendations called for additional research on Native adult education, an evaluation

of the adult Native education delivery system, provisions for instruction in traditional languages, provisions for the development of culturally related education modules, and increased funding for Native education programs. The report concluded that although Native based adult education programs displayed higher completion rates than non-Native programs, neither program adequately served the needs of the Native community. "Success is illusory...[adult education programs] do not fulfill the needs of the Indian student nor do they improve their literacy except in cases of the extremely motivated student who will succeed despite the system." The most recent study concerning Native adult vocational programs was conducted by an ad hoc committee of concerned Native educators. Entitled the **National Indian Vocational Education Needs Analysis**, the report was released in August 1989 and presented to Congress during reauthorization hearings for the Carl D. Perkins Act.

The study surveyed 280 Native communities to identify rates of unemployment, high school drop outs, average educational attainment levels, and other pertinent data. The authors warn of methodological problems resulting from non-standardization of data collection, a small return of the survey instrument (25 percent), and an extremely limited operating budget. Nevertheless, the report contends that the study provides important indications "of the directions that tribes lean with regard to vocational education" (NIVENA, 89, p. 7).

Major study findings include:

- Unemployment ranges from a low of seven percent to a high of 90 percent.
- Drop out rates are exceedingly high: on-reservation rates average 38 percent while off-reservation rates for some tribes average 28 percent.
- Of those surveyed the average grade level completed was grade 10.

The authors included a four-point summary:

1. A great need exists to establish Indian vocational education programs linked to economic development at the local Tribal level.
2. A need exists to address vocational education opportunities for a growing population of Indian youth which attend BIA funded secondary schools. Currently, these schools are not eligible to receive state appropriated or state allocated Carl Perkins Vocational Education Act funds. Resources from the Indian Vocational

Education Program are not sufficient to provide adequate vocational education for this population.

3. A need exists to consistently address postsecondary vocational education opportunities for tribally controlled institutions. In particular, funds need to be made available for tribal colleges and to maintain operation of postsecondary vocational education institutions such as Crownpoint Institute of Technology and the United Tribes Technical College. These schools are not eligible for state appropriated funds, and the receipt of federal funds from each state largely depends on the view of each state toward tribal entities.
4. A significant need exists to establish a National Indian Center for Research in Vocational-Technical Training. The existing research centers are oriented toward states and public schools.

Some of the above concerns were addressed with the reauthorization of the Carl Perkins Act. Tribal colleges and BIA schools now have greater access to Indian Vocational Program funds. Native communities are still afforded the opportunity to apply for discretionary funds. The requested three-percent, set-aside was not incorporated into the new legislation.

### *Summation of the historical relationship between Native communities and the federal government.*

The studies and reports presented in this section provide overwhelming evidence that the federal government has not fulfilled its promise to provide for the education of American Indians and Alaska Natives. Each of the reports have identified the problems facing Native adults and have made recommendations for change. Yet it is clear that little has changed. The relationship between the federal government and Native communities remains distressingly constant. The conditions within Native communities remain sadly predictable. A 1990 report entitled **The Demographics of American Indians: One percent of the People; Fifty percent of the Diversity** (Hodgkinson 1990) assembled statistics from a variety of sources and provides a present day picture of Native communities: American Indian youth are overwhelmingly attending public schools; the national dropout rate (35 percent) is the highest of any minority group. In 1988 29 percent of Native eighth graders had repeated at

least one grade — 40 percent had scored in the lowest quartile on tests in history, math, reading and science — 19 percent expected to drop out of high school or go no further — 11 percent had missed a week or more of school during a four week period (National Education Longitudinal Study, 1988). A 1988 BIA report (Report on BIA Education: Final Draft, 1988, p. 91) presented similar findings and stated that Native students attending BIA operated and contracted schools scored well below national norms on nationally standardized tests. Such conditions mirror past failures because the federal government still tries to manage Native education programs from afar or from within massive bureaucratic institutions. Reform will not occur until the government understands that the greatest need involving Native education is a *change in point of view*. Lewis Meriam's recommendation has been reformulated and reworded but always repeated by the authors of every major report since the 1920s. It was the spirit behind the Indian Reorganization Act and the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistant Act. Boldly interpreted, it calls for a redirection of federal funds from federal agencies to Native governments. It conveys the historic view that Native governments be treated as sovereign nations — fully able to determine the educational direction of their members.

### **Current Strategies: A Description and Assessment of State and Federal Adult Education and Vocational Training Programs.**

Native leaders, educators and community members understand that the success of adult education and training is tied to the economic conditions of their communities. A INAR Task Force member expressed this relationship while attending the 1990 National Indian Education Association Conference in San Diego, California: *The problem with vocational education is similar to the chicken and the egg. There is no reason to become skilled and educated if there are no jobs to look forward to. On the other hand, [Native communities] are not going to attract industry unless there is a skilled labor force.* (Ely, San Diego, 1990, p. 6).

The INAR Task Force collected a wide range of concerns expressed by Native educators, which fall into three basic categories: Economic Development, Labor Force Realities, and Funding. A summary of those expressions follows:



The presence of a factory off the reservation providing \$3.50-per-hour jobs, in my judgment a sweatshop, should not be viewed as an option. We are able to bring onto [our] reservation such jobs as sewing and surging (stitching process)... a very simple, very low technology, very boring [process]. These kinds of jobs do not inspire or motivate young men...to finish high school. (Ho, San Diego, California, 90, p. 6)

A vocational program is very, very expensive to run. We don't have the equipment...we don't have the money to buy the equipment. We have approached some of the local industry...on or near our reservation...but they are donated out. (San Diego, California, 90, p. 9)

Several years ago, the [BIA] on our reservation decided they were going to train everyone to be welders...everybody showed up...everyone became certified welders...and they're all unemployed today because there was no connection between industry and training. (San Diego, California, p. 31)

To be eligible to apply for state (Carl Perkins Vocational Program or Adult Basic Education Program) funds you must either be a local education agency (LEA) or an institution of higher education. A tribe doesn't fall into either category. I've written to Washington, D.C., and to the state, and they each blame the other for that regulation. (San Diego, California, 90, p. 12)

To accurately assess the impact of state and federal adult education and training programs, Native community leaders and federal and state legislators have to resolve the debate that centers around the following questions:

- Who is a Native?
- How many Natives are there?
- How many Native adults are there?
- How many have completed a high school education?
- How many are unemployed or underemployed?

The question as to who is a Native is very controversial.

Of the 500 or so Native communities and organizations in the United States, about 400 have a relationship with the federal government. Native governments determine their membership through blood quantum measurements, descendant roles, marriage, and other criteria established by their constitutions. While the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), U.S. Department of Education (ED), and the Indian Health Service (IHS) acknowledge this historic right, they add variations to the defini-

tion and often report differing figures than the Census Bureau. Thus, the data is convoluted and hampers the validity of any report concerning the condition of Native adults. To avert confusion and centralize debate, the following description of Native adults was drawn from a U.S. Department of Interior report entitled **Report of the Task Force on Indian Economic Development** (July 1986).

The data reveals that while Natives account for less than one percent of the nation's total population, on-reservation Natives are highly represented in a number of disheartening categories: Forty-four percent have not attained a high school degree; 41.2 percent are below the poverty level, and 16.9 percent of the civilian labor force is unemployed.

Even more disturbing information can be found in other studies that report a range of data. Such studies (McQuiston and Brod, 1977) (Ad Hoc Committee, 1989) uncover high school drop out rates from 10 to 80 percent; unemployment rates ranging from 7 to 90 percent, and poverty rates exceeding 50 percent. What is missing on the national level are current data concerning the number of Native adults in need of adult basic education and vocational training programs. Without such pertinent data federal budgets will continue to be constructed on invalid estimates of the Native adult population in need.

## Federal Legislation and Bureau of Indian Affairs Education Programs

The United States Congress has enacted an array of legislation aimed at increasing the educational and vocational opportunities afforded to adult American Indian and Alaska Natives. The Adult Education Act and the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act provide funds to the states to operate adult education and vocational training programs. Natives participate in these federally funded, state administered programs by attending state accredited high schools, adult education programs, junior colleges and four-year universities. The Indian Education Act, the Indian and Hawaiian Natives Vocational Education Program, the Joint Training Partnership Act, and the Family Support Act and such Bureau of Indian Affairs programs as Adult Education and Adult Vocational Training provide direct funding to Native communities and organizations to develop their own educational programs. A summary of these Acts and BIA programs follows:

## Adult Education Act

The Adult Education Act (AEA) was reauthorized in 1988 (Public Law 100-297). The federally funded, state administered program is overseen by the U.S. Department of Education's Division of Adult Education and Literacy. The AEA allows for the development of programs to under educated adults in three general areas: Adult Basic Education (ABE), English as a Second Language (ESL), and Adult Secondary Education (ASE).

The AEA provides federal, formula based grants to state educational agencies (SEA), which then, according to a state plan, distribute the funds to local educational agencies (LEAs) and community based educational institutes. Such programs received \$134 million in fiscal year 1988, with state and local support for these programs totalling four times that amount.

Table 1 compares the number of American Indians and Alaska Natives with the total enrollment within state-administered adult education programs.

**Table 1**  
Comparison of Numbers of American Indian and Alaska Natives Enrolled in State-Administered Adult Education Programs by Year

| Year | U.S. Total Population | Native Population | Percent Native |
|------|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| 1985 | 2,879,125             | 26,102            | 0.91%          |
| 1986 | 3,069,677             | 26,102            | 0.82%          |
| 1987 | 2,949,720             | 29,457            | 1.00%          |
| 1988 | 3,039,430             | 26,906            | 0.89%          |

Source: Department of Education

The National Advisory Council on Indian Education, in its 16th Annual Report (NACIE Annual Report, 1990, p. 12) to the U.S. Congress, cautions that Native national participation totals are inaccurate. The incorrect count occurs because some states combine in their year-end reports students enrolled in state-administered adult education programs with students graduating from Native community programs. Federal appropriations are then based on these inflated reports, creating a financial gain for services not provided. Another problem arises with the definition of American Indian and Alaska Natives. States primarily use self-identification as a means of segregating their counts, which can disguise the amount of services available to Native communities.

Native communities are often left out of the distribution of the AEA funding process since Native educational programs are not considered local educational agencies. Lack of LEA status also

prevents most Native communities from sharing in adult education funds raised by state taxes and distributed to state education programs. For example, in the state of Michigan, AEA funds are available to LEAs, non-profit educational institutions, and community based agencies while state generated funds are restricted to LEAs. Native programs seeking AEA assistance as community based institutions can receive around \$200 per student. But LEAs can receive up to \$3,000 per student from state funds to operate their programs. Thus, the problem facing Michigan Native communities is not one of access to AEA funds but of equity.

## Indian Education Act

In 1988 when President Ronald Reagan signed into law the Augustus F. Hawkins-Robert T. Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments of 1988, he became the third President to reauthorize the Indian Education Act (IEA). The IEA is contained within the language of Public Law 100-297 and provides for the maintenance of the Office of Indian Education, formula grants to school districts containing large Native populations (Subpart 1), discretionary programs to Native communities and organizations seeking to fund educational programs for Native children (Subpart 2) and adults (Subpart 3), a fellowship program, and the continuance of the National Advisory Council on Indian Education.

The Indian adult education program is administered by the United States Department of Education's Office of Indian Education (OIE). Subpart 3 of the Act provides discretionary grants to American Indian and Alaska Native communities and villages, organizations, and institutions to operate adult education programs. Two of the activities funded under the program are: (1) educational services and instruction; and, (2) planning, pilot and demonstration projects. The goals of such programs range from providing basic literacy instruction, adult basic education services, and high school completion to planning, testing, and demonstrating the effectiveness of innovative programs designed to improve Native adult instructional methods and job opportunities. Many programs additionally offer instruction in such areas as consumer education, employment awareness skills, job referral, aptitude testing, and educational counseling.

In fiscal year 1989 OIE awarded 32 grants to projects serving approximately 7,200 Native adults. The awards went to 12 Native communities, 14 Native organizations, and 6 Native controlled community colleges. Eleven of the

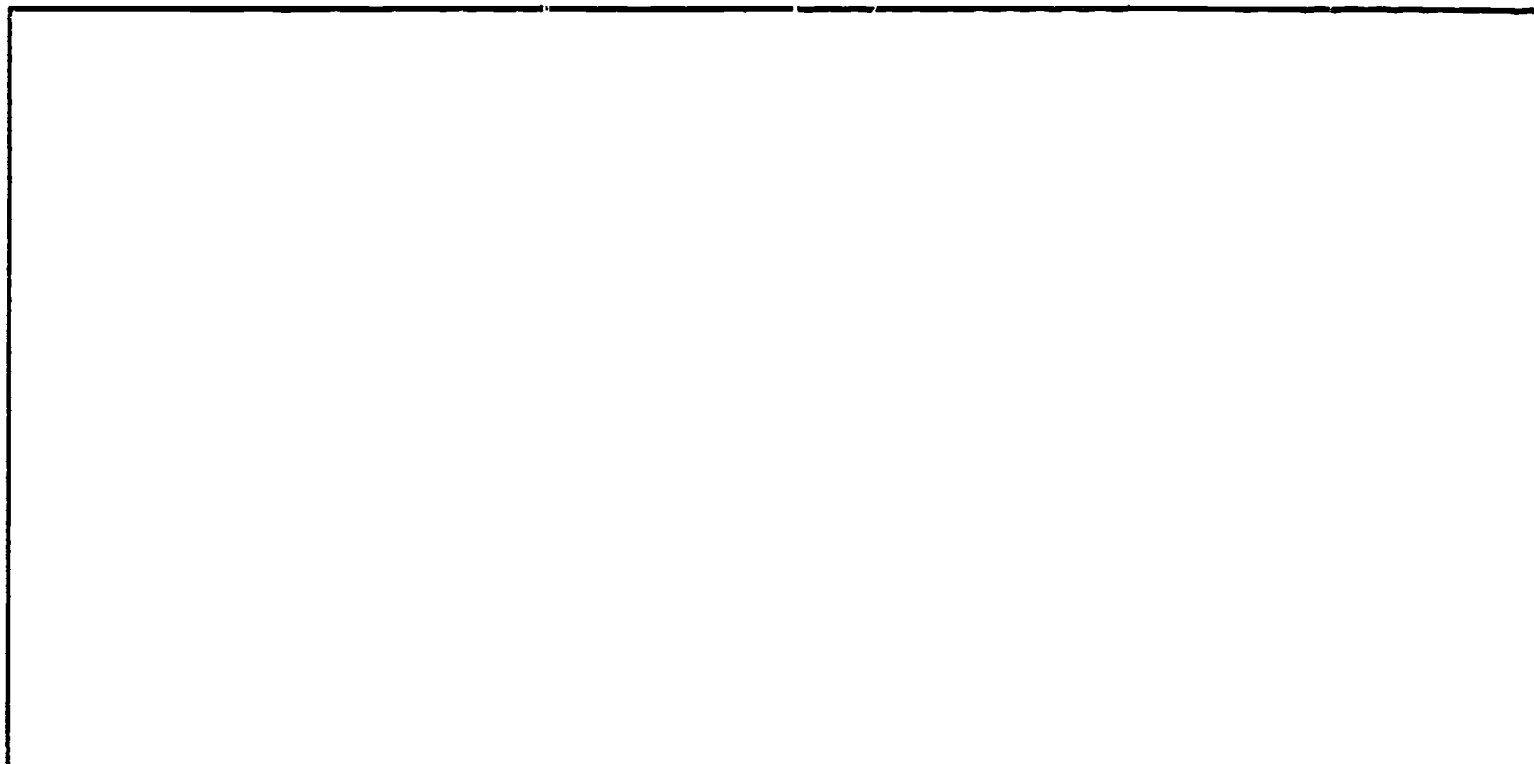


Figure 1. Comparison of On and Off Reservation American Indian and Alaska Native Economic Conditions with Total U.S. Population

awards went to urban areas, and 21 went to rural or reservation settings. Grants ranged from a low of \$28,468 to a high of \$397,414.

Table 2 provides a five-year breakdown of program appropriation levels, distribution of grants, and participant levels.

open entry and open exit, instruction was self-paced and individualized, and curriculum was mostly commercially prepared instructional materials. The report provided ten questions and report findings to a panel of experts (Native educators) for consensus review. An abridged

TABLE 2

Office of Indian Education Adult Education Program Funding by Fiscal Year

| Fiscal Year | Appropriations | Number of Programs | Number of Participants | Per Pupil Expenditure |
|-------------|----------------|--------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1985        | \$2,940,000    | 22                 | 7,222                  | \$407                 |
| 1986        | 2,797,000      | 25                 | 10,632                 | 262                   |
| 1987        | 3,000,000      | 29                 | 9,600                  | 313                   |
| 1988        | 3,000,000      | 25                 | 5,600                  | 531                   |
| 1989        | 4,000,000      | 32                 | 7,200                  | 556                   |

Source: Department of Education, Office of Indian Education

An independent evaluation of ten IEA adult education programs was conducted in 1984. The study entitled **An Evaluation of the Indian Education Act, Title IV, Part C: Education for Indian Adults** described and evaluated adult education programs at ten sites (Pelavin Associates Inc., 84). The report found that most programs offering educational services provided GED and ABE level instruction. Enrollment was

selection of those questions and panel comments follows:

1. Are Native adult education projects doing what the law and regulations intend? "In all cases, the activities funded were those authorized by law" (p. 109).
2. To what extent are the services delivered actually those that seem to be necessary? "In most cases, the services delivered are



those that seem to be most necessary" (p. 110).

3. Is the grant process mechanism and process as currently established an effective and efficient method for serving the target population? "The grants process as currently structured...may be responsible for two problems discovered in the study. First, only scarce resources are available to meet the needs of the target population...many adult Indians throughout the United States...have no access to any adult education program. Secondly, a number of grantees compete successfully year after year for [Subpart 3] funds, and it seems that few new applicants are successful in competing for grants" (p. 113).
4. Is duplication of services an issue in the distribution of [Subpart 3] funds? "The panel of experts defined 'duplication of services' as instances where the same population is served by two or more local projects, each offering culturally appropriate educational services of comparable scope and quality. The panel concluded that this evaluation found only one instance of such duplication" (p. 114).
5. Is the distinction between educational services, and planning, pilot, and demonstration projects important? "Except for Project SEARCH and curriculum development efforts, the sampled sites showed little difference" (p. 116).  
[Skipping 6, & 7]
8. Has the Office of Indian Education (OIE) administered [Subpart 3] well? "[Subpart 3] projects have received little attention, little project monitoring, and little technical assistance from OIE" (p. 118).

Literacy was largely unaddressed by the study as it found few programs that delivered such instruction. The study suggested that for pragmatic reasons most programs provided GED preparation, rather than literacy instruction. Literacy instruction is the most costly instruction to provide. It requires literacy trained teachers, of which there are few; the use of specialized instructional materials, of which little exists; and the recruitment of illiterate adults, a long and arduous process that often reaps few candidates. On the other hand, ABE and GED teachers are comparatively numerous and easily hired. Adult basic education and GED instructional materials are abundant, and large numbers of Native adults who left school after or during the 8th grade are readily

attracted to GED completion programs. Literacy programs are needed within Native communities. Subpart 3 of the IEA, however, appears unable to properly fund or motivate Native communities to establish such programs.

Funding levels and the competitive application process of the IEA adult education program are points of contention with Native educators: *We've been [pleading] year after year [for] more money and we know that money's not growing. It's shrinking. Funding needs to be spread as far and wide as possible...because we have problems with Indians fighting each other.* (Bonito, San Diego, California, p. 31).

The adult education portion of the IEA has never been fully funded. Such requests from past and present OIE directors often lack the support of the United States Department of Education (ED) officials and have been turned down by the Office of Management and Budget. Thus, the program has never been able to satisfy the expressed need for adult education within Native communities. For the past five years, OIE has funded an average of 26.6 (new and continuing) applications per year. The yearly number of proposals requesting funding, received by that office, often climbs to three times the amount funded.

Proposals are evaluated and scored by reading panels composed of Native educators and ED personnel. As directed by law, priority points are given to Native communities and organizations. Scores from individual readers are compiled, statistically standardized, and rank-ordered. The order is followed in making grant awards. Grants are awarded on a one, two and three year basis. The process invites challenges from the Native community. Hard pressed to enlist Natives into the review process, the department has often had to reduce panels from three to two readers and to allow readers with marginal adult education experience into the system.

An example of reader conflict occurred in 1988 when the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians' proposal fell from being one of the top rated proposals of previous years to not fundable. An examination of the scoring process revealed that reader disagreement was never standardized prior to ranking the tribe's proposal. Reader disagreement in such key areas as program need, plan of operation, and quality of key personnel varied by as much as thirty points. One reader even deducted points for the omission of a program time line, which was not only provided in the proposal but also noted in the proposal's table of context. After long discussions between the tribe and the

department, the proposal was funded at 50 percent of the budgeted request.

In its 15th Annual Report to Congress, the National Advisory Council on Indian Education implied that the overall operational quality of OIE has suffered from a lack of leadership. For the past 10 years, there have been more acting directors than permanent directors, and only five of the nine directors have been Native or of Native descent. According to the American Indian Adult Education Association (AIAEA), this lack of permanent leadership has led to a decline in the staffing levels of the office and the number of Native people employed or seeking employment within OIE. The AIAEA is concerned that throughout the history of OIE the office has had few staff members able to deal with or understand the problems associated with adult education. The Association further points to the lack of data collected concerning drop out and graduation rates versus high school and GED completion as one of the reasons adult education remains a low funding priority among Native education programs.

Problems associated with leadership, staff

programs. In order to accomplish those goals, Tippeconnic will need the support of the Native communities as he takes these requests into discussions with his superiors at the Office of Secondary Education and the Office of Management and Budget.

### *Adult Education Program: Bureau of Indian Affairs.*

The Bureau of Indian Affairs' Adult Education Program is authorized by the Synder Act of 1921 (Public Law 67-85). Program instruction is based on community need assessments and includes such areas as adult basic education, high school completion, consumer education, employment awareness skills, job referral, and educational counseling. In fiscal year 1989, 75 Native communities chose to administer adult education programs under Public Law 93-638 (Self-Determination) contracts; 13 programs were administered by the BIA.

Table 3 provides a five-year breakdown of appropriation levels, distribution of grants, and participant levels.

**Table 3**

#### **Bureau of Indian Affairs Adult Education Program Funding by Fiscal Year**

| <b>Fiscal Year</b> | <b>Appropriations</b> | <b>Number of Programs</b> | <b>Approx. Number of Participants</b> | <b>Per Pupil Expenditure</b> |
|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1985               | \$3,474,000           | 88                        | 13,520                                | \$257                        |
| 1986               | 3,391,000             | 88                        | 12,800                                | 265                          |
| 1987               | 3,141,000             | 88                        | 13,000                                | 262                          |
| 1988               | 3,141,000             | 88                        | 12,000                                | 251                          |
| 1989               | 3,138,000             | 88                        | 12,500                                | 255                          |

Source: BIA Reports

shortages, and lack of data culminated in 1989, when the then acting director of OIE stood before the Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs and stated he saw no need to increase the funding level to the discretionary adult education program. Such testimony often reflects the view of officials within the Office of Planning and Budget and Evaluation rather than the personal opinions of the director of OIE.

The present director of OIE, John Tippeconnic III, does not share the feelings of his predecessor. In a 1990 meeting with Native educators, he stated his office intends to seek an increased appropriation for adult education programs, to hire additional Native staff, and to collect data to determine the extent of the need for Native adult education

Native educators cite the low funding level of this program and its inclusion in the Indian Priority System (IPS) as reasons why it has not had greater impact on the educational problems of Native communities. The priority system provides Native governments with some authority to decide the services they would provide if the tribe's base funding level were at 80, 90, 100 or 110 percent of the prior year's level. Programs under the priority system are categorized under such headings as Education, Natural Resources, Indian Services, Credit and Finance, Trust Responsibilities and Administrative Services. Tribal contract programs include Adult Education, Higher Education, Adult Vocational Training, Employment Assistance, Scholarships, Tribal Courts, Social Services, Law

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Enforcement, Community Fire Protection, Youth Work Learn, and Water Quality. Priority selections are determined at tribal/agency offices then passed on to Area Offices and compiled at the Bureau's Central Office in Washington D.C. The results are included in the President's budget to Congress. In theory the priority system provides Congress and Central Office staff with the information needed to identify and budget funds for high priority programs. Many Native communities charge that the system does little more than provide Central Office staff with a "hit" list to reduce program funding levels or eliminate programs. A number of Native educators and education organizations would like to separate adult education from the IPS in the hope that it may receive more attention and funding as a stand-alone program. Some Native leaders disagree and want the program to remain in the IPS allowing tribes to continue to administer the program under Public Law 93-638 contracts. Both Native educators and community leaders agree that the IPS forces absurd decisions. To establish or enlarge an adult education program, a tribe must vote to eliminate or decrease such other essential services as social services, police enforcement, or land management.

The BIA adult education program appears to be suffering from a lack of attention and direction. At present the program is being administered by an education specialist who must split duties with the Bureau's higher education program. Prior to the specialist's hiring, the BIA had been unable to permanently fill the position for a number of years. With no one in charge, program end-year reports as far back as 1986 went mostly unread and unanalyzed — stacked in boxes throughout the office. The BIA is well aware of the problem. A 1988 report states "given the current numbers and skills, many OIEP staff are simply overwhelmed by the burden of their jobs...legally required reports to Congress on the status of Indian education have not been prepared at all in some years, and when prepared have lacked basic data, information and analysis." The report contends that at present OIEP is failing to exercise the instructional and management leadership role that is its proper function (Report on BIA Education: Final Draft, 1988, p. 181).

### *Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act.*

The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Adult and Vocational Education administers vocational education programs under the authorization of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act

(Public Law 101-392). The stated purpose of the Act is to "make the United States more competitive in the world economy by developing more fully the academic and occupational skills of all segments of the population."

The Basic Grant program of the Act provides funding to state educational agencies, which then distribute funds within the state according to a state plan. Most often, states distribute the majority of their funds to LEAs, with smaller amounts available to private non-profit organizations and community based organizations. The various programs and amounts funded under the vocational education program for fiscal year 1989 follow.

Native communities and organizations are eligible for funding under this program if the state in which they reside has included their needs in the state plan. Most states do not. If Native needs are not part of the state plan, most states allow Native communities to compete for small subgrants under the title of public and private nonprofit organizations. The major blockage to Native participation is the lack of LEA status.

Native students, however, do participate in state administered vocational education programs within various public school systems. The degree and success of that participation is uncertain. According to the National Advisory Council on Indian Education, the 1982-83 school year was the last time any type of formal count of the number and ethnicity of participants was made. The count revealed that 63,834 Native students were enrolled in state sponsored programs. Of that number, 30,616 were males and 33,218 were females. The total number of vocational students served during that year amounted to 9,810,000.

### *Indian and Hawaiian Natives Vocational Education Program.*

Authorization for the Indian and Hawaiian Native Vocational Education Program (IHNVEP) is contained within the language of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act. It is administered by the United States Department of Education, Office of Adult and Vocational Education, Special Programs Branch. The program began in 1977 with an appropriation of \$5.2 million and has increased to \$11 million for fiscal year 1991. The program offers discretionary grants to eligible Native communities, colleges, and organizations to operate vocational training programs in such areas as office administration, construction trades, forestry, engine repair, fishery management, boat building and other trades linked to job placement and Native com-



munity economic development. Grants are awarded through a competitive process that involves a panel of expert readers who score each application against set criteria. Applications are then rank-ordered and funded until the year's appropriation is exhausted. The system is identical to the discretionary grant selection process employed by the Office of Indian Education, and it incurs virtually the same criticism as noted in that section. The Perkins Act was reauthorized in 1990, adding significant changes to the IHNVE program. Changes include new programs for Native controlled vocational technical schools — a \$2.44 million appropriation; new programs for economic development institutes tied to Native community controlled colleges; the inclusion of BIA schools in the set-aside; new formulas for the distribution of funds to public schools with high Native enrollments; and the elimination of 65 percent placement requirement for graduates of Native programs. A 14-year funding history follows in Table 4.

Successful Native community programs include the Tribal Management Secretarial Training Program at Bay Mills Community College in Michigan; the Heavy Equipment Operator training program at the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community; the Industrial Training Program of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians; and the Bank Teller training program at the Grand Traverse Band of Chippewa and Ottawa Indian Community. All of these training programs are tied to the economic development plans of their communities and report excellent placement rates. The goal of these projects is usually two-fold: to reduce the community unemployment rates, and to enhance tribal operations by providing a trained work force for Native governments, industries and businesses.

At the postsecondary level two fully accredited Native community controlled vocational institutes exist: Crownpoint Institute of Technology (CIT) and United Tribes Technical College (UTTC). Crownpoint was founded in 1979 and is located in

Table 4  
Funding Trends for the Office of Vocational and Adult Education,  
U.S. Department of Education

| Fiscal Year | Appropriations | Continuation Projects | New Projects | Total Projects | Applications Received |
|-------------|----------------|-----------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| 1977        | \$ 5,281,476   | 0                     | 20           | 20             | 78                    |
| 1978        | 5,437,777      | 19                    | 11           | 30             | 40                    |
| 1979        | 5,929,888      | 29                    | 3            | 32             | 31                    |
| 1980        | 6,929,755      | 8                     | 26           | 34             | 58                    |
| 1981        | 6,186,230      | 26                    | 0            | 26             | 0                     |
| 1982        | 5,936,734      | 22                    | 0            | 22             | 0                     |
| 1983        | 6,645,484      | 0                     | 30           | 30             | 87                    |
| 1984        | 6,733,624      | 29                    | 0            | 29             | 0                     |
| 1985        | 9,895,639      | 25                    | 20           | 45             | 74                    |
| 1986        | 9,564,367      | 19                    | 22           | 41             | 92                    |
| 1987        | 10,414,350     | 18                    | 30           | 48             | 71                    |
| 1988        | 10,462,777     | 28                    | 12           | 40             | 71                    |
| 1989        | 10,808,990     | 35                    | 5            | 40             | 37                    |
| 1990        | 11,009,952     | 16                    | 22           | 38             | 70                    |
| Totals      | \$111,237,045  | 274                   | 201          | 475            | 709                   |

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education

Since 1977, 91 individual Native communities and organizations programs, located in 30 states, have been funded by the program. An average of 5,000 Native students are annually served through Native community programs, with an average job placement rate of 75 percent.

Crownpoint, New Mexico, and offers one-year training certificates in nine vocational areas. In 1988 the Institute reported a retention rate of nearly 90 percent and a positive placement rate (student employment or further training) of 80 percent. The Navajo language is employed in the

## Adult and Vocational Education

classroom as CIT primarily serves the needs of the Navajo Nation. If funds were available to expand CIT, it could serve the needs of an additional (approximately) 60,000 Natives located in Arizona, New Mexico, Utah and Colorado.

United Tribes Technical College is located in Bismarck, North Dakota, and from August to May of each year enrolls an average of 275 Native adults and some 180 children. The college provides education and vocational training to adults residing on the 105 acre campus, and it operates a nursery, preschool, elementary and middle school for the dependent children. Adults can seek training in one of eleven vocational programs or upgrade basic academic skills through UTTC's adult education program. The college primarily serves the Native residents of North Dakota, South Dakota, and Montana with lesser enrollments coming from Utah, Nebraska, Wyoming, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Washington. The average student is 22 years of age. The college has a waiting list that annually exceeds 200.

Native communities take issue with the IHNVEP in three areas: inadequate funding levels, the competitive funding process and the BIA for its continued failure to provide the mandated funding match. Table 5 reveals that during the past 11

category of their survey, 41 had never applied, 6 had been rejected, 10 had received funding, and 2 had applications pending. Reasons for not submitting applications ranged from a lack of program awareness, to a lack of sufficient technical [proposal writing] assistance to compile a proposal. No tribe with 500 or less members had applied for funding. The report noted that some of the reservations with the highest unemployment rates were the least able to present a competitive application.

The BIA's failure to match IHNVEP appropriations represents a funding loss of more than \$100 million to Native vocational programs. The lost funds would have strengthened and widened the services of the above noted institutions, and probably would have allowed for the development of vocational programs within the most impoverished Native communities. The current system continually rewards those most able to employ or hire effective grant writers. Since 1977 the IHNVEP has funded just over 100 of the 400 eligible Native communities and organizations.

### *Adult Vocational Training: Bureau of Indian Affairs.*

The BIA's Office of Tribal Services administers

TABLE 5

Vocational Education Programs of the U.S. Department of Education, FY 1989

| Program                                     | Funding Level |
|---|---------------|
| Basic Grants                                | \$831,566,000 |
| Consumer and Homemaker Education            | 33,118,000    |
| National Programs                           | 26,005,000    |
| Community-Based Programs                    | 7,904,000     |
| Permanent Appropriations (Smith-Hughes Act) | 7,148,000     |

Source: U.S. Department of Education

years the program has funded 201 of the 709 new applications it has received from Native communities and organizations. This is a funding rate of 28 percent, which means that 508 applicants were turned down because of a lack of funds and application quality during the past 11 years. Federal program staff affirm that low funding levels have prevented the funding of a large number of quality applications. Crown Point's application was not funded in 1990, and UTTC has not been funded since 1984. The previously mentioned National Indian Vocational Needs Analysis (NIVENA) reported that of the 61 tribes responding to the IHNVEP discretionary grant application

the Adult Vocational and Training program. The program has two basic components: Adult Vocational Training (AVT) and Employment Assistance. The AVT component is basically a financial assistance program that provides Native communities with funds to help adults attend state accredited vocational training centers. The Employment Assistance program provides funds to assist unemployed adults who possess an employable skill to obtain employment. Such assistance includes job placement, relocation to a job site, work clothing costs, and financial assistance until the first full pay check is received. Like the BIA's adult education program, this program is funded

through the IPS and suffers the same funding problems.

In 1991 AVT appropriations amounted to \$16,927 million, and the Employment Assistance program totalled \$2,274 million. Employment Assistance appropriations have declined in recent years as Native communities have concentrated on developing employment on their reservations rather than assisting tribal members to leave the community to find employment. In 1990 155 Native communities contracted with the Bureau for AVT programs, with the Bureau administering 31 programs.

This is an important program. United States Department of Labor reports indicate that the American economy is rapidly shifting from a manufacturing base to a high technology, service industry. By the year 2000, the majority of new jobs will require at least some post secondary education. Occupations which demand a college trained work force are expected to be the fastest growing. Workers with these occupations will be among the highest paid and the least likely to become unemployed. On the other hand, occupations that will require an untrained work force will be among the lowest paying, and those workers are most likely to become unemployed. These trends indicate that more complex job skills will be required. Employers will expect candidates to have mastered such basic skills as reading and writing, and they will be looking for those who possess specialized computation and problem solving skills. Such projections have important implications for Native communities. They predict that the gulf between the employable and unemployable will grow even wider as the cost of education and training programs rises along side the demand.

A Native educator expressed this view to INAR Task Force in California: *With changing technology and higher skills needed for employment, you need at least a two-year degree to be hired in a decent salaried position...the short term training programs are out.* (San Diego, 1990, p. 7)

The AVT program is designed to provide funding for such training. Yet the program appears to be in decline. The Washington, D.C., office has not had a permanent division chief for a number of years. Office staffing has been reduced to the point where only one administrative officer has been left in charge of the day-to-day operations with no secretarial assistance. While field offices monitor community programs, year-end reports sent to the Central office have not been evaluated to assess national impact for the past two years. The program has not identified model programs, nor has

it held conferences to allow community programs to share problems or effective practices.

### *Joint Training Partnership Act*

The Joint Training Partnership Act (Public Law 97-300) was enacted in 1982. Contained within the language of the Act is the Employment and Training Programs for Native Americans and Migrant and Seasonal Farm workers. The program is administered by the United States Department of Labor and Employment's division of Indian and Native American Programs. The preamble of the Act states that because serious unemployment and economic disadvantages exist among members of the Indian, Alaska Native, and Hawaiian Native communities, there is a compelling need for the establishment of comprehensive training and employment programs for members of those communities. The Act provides formula based funds to Native communities and organizations to develop such adult employment and training programs as On-the-Job Training (OJT), Work Experience (WE), Community Service Employment (CSE), and Classroom Training (CT).

The OJT component provides participant training in the public or private sector. It pays up to 50 percent of the participant's salary for a period of 44 weeks. Once the training period is over, it is expected that either the employer will hire the participant full-time, or that the participant will leave with enough experience to obtain full-time, unsubsidized work in a similar field. The WE program is designed to enhance the employability of individuals through the development of reliable work habits and basic skills. The CSE component authorizes subsidized work, normally provided by the government, in occupations which are expected to expand within the public or private sector. The CT program can be designed to fit the labor market needs of the community in which the JTPA program resides. Such classroom programs may train secretaries to fill a need within tribal administrative offices or provide funds to allow participants to attend welding classes to fill an industrial need.

In fiscal year 1989 the Native JTPA program provided 182 grants to Native communities and organizations. Of that number, 133 were located within Native communities, and 49 were located in rural and urban areas. A total of 30,128 Native adults and youth received training under the program, with an average hourly wage of \$5.50 per hour for the non-classroom components. Annual appropriations for the program average \$60 million.

Participant performance quotas and income level requirements often dictate that Native com-



munities enroll only those adults most able to obtain full-time employment. The practice is called *creaming* and often limits the program's ability to work with those most in need. The creaming complaint is not limited to the Native program but is a complaint heard throughout the whole of the JTPA program.

### *Family Support Act*

The Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Program (JOBS) was authorized in 1988 with the passage of the Family Support Act (Public Law 100-485). The Act provides funding to states to establish programs which create job opportunities and basic skills training for recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). The program is designed to assist such recipients to become self-sufficient. The program specifically targets single, never-married mothers who did not graduate from high school and who had their first child at a young age. The program provides funds for the care of dependent children while the parent or parents are enrolled in educational completion programs or vocational training programs.

Subpart J of the Act provides direct federal funding, through a formula based system, to American Indian and Alaska Native communities. Native program funding levels are based on the number of adult Native AFDC recipients who live within the service area of the Native community. The program targets this population. Client services are delivered in three stages. The first stage involves an assessment of the client's academic and job readiness skills and the preparation of an individual employment plan. Stage two services depend on the findings of the client assessment and the job readiness plan. For instance, Native adults hampered by reading problems are referred to literacy programs. Adults who have not completed high school are referred to a high school or GED completion program, and adults in need of an employable skill are referred to a technical training or on-the-job training program. Stage three involves securing self-sustaining employment. In addition, program counselors connect participants with a host of social service programs that work to ensure adequate housing, health care, and nutrition. Such services can include Native low-income housing programs, Indian Health Care Services, and federal food distribution programs. The program can also provide participants with travel expenses, clothing assistance, and primary day care costs.

For fiscal year 1991, the JOBS program has provided grants to 76 Native communities located in 23 states. The current funding level stands at

\$60 million. Native communities receive funds directly from the federal government and an even match from the state in which they reside.

The program is so new that evaluation criteria are still being devised. As a result, impact assessments have not been conducted. However, the target population — unemployed, never married mothers — is prevalent within Native communities and should benefit from such a program.

### *Concluding Thoughts*

The more I learn about the problems facing under educated and unemployed Native adults, the more I believe that we must make repairs on all fronts. On the federal level the two most important agencies serving Native communities, ED and the BIA, appear caught between serving the needs of Native communities and giving way to demands by the federal government to control or reduce expenditures. The situation is further exasperated as both agencies have either been unable or unwilling to resolve issues of sovereignty and self-determination with the Native governments they serve. The result is that both agencies now appear locked in a dysfunctional bureaucratic malaise. The situation has caught the attention of Senator DeConcini whose Special Committee on Investigations was dismayed by findings of mismanagement in the BIA and IHS. The Senator will introduce legislation in the 102nd Congress to redirect federal appropriations from federal agencies directly to Native communities. The legislation would establish an Office of Federal-Tribal Relations in the Executive Branch. Meanwhile, the BIA has taken steps to put its own house in order. In 1990 the Bureau attempted to implement a significant institutional reorganization. The effort, however, was halted after a significant number of Native communities complained to Congress that they were not consulted on the proposed reorganization. Since that time a task force of Native government leaders and Bureau personnel has been established to guide the restructuring of the BIA. The Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs is preparing legislation to establish a permanent Native American Advisory Committee to guide the future actions of the BIA.

Productive change, however, will not occur until both OIEP and OIE can garner the support of the Congress, the Executive Branch and the Native community. Not since President Nixon and the publication of the Kennedy Report has any real attention been given to Native problems. Neither agency currently has the ear of the Congress or the President. There is no Casper Weinberger (the vocal Secretary of Defense under President

Reagan) heading ED or the BIA to push the Native agenda. Native communities have to fill this power gap and begin to better promote their needs on the federal level. Native leaders must refocus their target and rather than taking sole aim at OIE and OIEP for failing to gain additional funding, they must push Congress to challenge or override budgetary restraints coming from OMB. Change will result when Native leaders convince Congress and the President to pay closer attention to the educational needs of American Indian and Alaska Natives.

On the state level, Native communities must be allowed to take an active role in the development of state education plans, to be included in the disbursement of educational funds, to be granted LEA status, and to be appreciated as a valued resource rather than a competitive government. Native communities could hasten this process by establishing state wide education committees. Such committees could determine the educational needs of their communities and present those needs to state departments of education or other state agencies that could provide assistance to Native education programs. Native communities and organizations should take an active role in presenting their concerns to state legislators. Such legislators that are identified as friendly to Native concerns should be supported during elections with fund raising events and voting drives.

On the community level, Native governments must take an active role in the education of their members. Tribal councils should closely monitor the effectiveness of their educational institutions and the public school system in which their children are enrolled. They should enact education codes that stress academic achievement and the infusion of tribal history and culture into the curricula of local school systems. They should monitor schools to determine achievement rates, student policies and curricula content. Native communities must continue to develop drug and alcohol programs, family counseling services, education scholarships, and provide other necessary services to ensure the health and welfare of their members. Native parents must take an active role in the education of their sons and daughters. They must inspire their children to succeed at school and motivate them to move on to a professional life. Parents should be encouraged to sit in on school board meetings, to attend parent-teacher conferences, to review school policies and to take other active roles in the education of their children.

A revitalization of Native education programs and Native economies must occur if Native communities are to gain control of their destiny. In the

past twenty years Native communities have established sophisticated administrative organizations. Many communities now operate factories, schools, colleges, hospitals, judicial systems, accounting departments and social service agencies. Such organizations require skilled employees who are able to understand the needs and desires of their community and at the same time operate complex programs according to tribal, state and federal standards. Native communities are already hard pressed to find and employ sufficient numbers of adequately trained Natives to staff such programs. This leaves Native governments with the choice between hiring an undertrained tribal member in the hope that the employee will grow into the position or hiring a fully trained and experienced non-Native. Neither choice is a good one as the first may contribute to a poorly managed program and the second fosters continued dependency on the non-Native community.

### *Recommendations to improve services provided to Native communities.*

The recommendations that follow are not new. They are current expressions of historical proposals for change. In 1969 the Kennedy Report admonished the federal government for not following the recommendations put forth in the Meriam Associates Report of 1926. In 1991 many of the recommendations put forth by the Kennedy Report have not been acted upon and now lay dormant. The recommendations presented here have been gleaned from the reports and studies mentioned in this paper, and from the testimony of those who gathered before the INAR Task Force hearings. As with other recommendations they do not provide a detailed blueprint for change. Some were developed with full knowledge of the present statutory and bureaucratic limitations they would encounter; others were formulated innocent of those barriers. None should be discarded simply because of a failure to meet some present regulation or because they are presently deemed to be not fundable. All should be considered as expressions for change. I will add my thoughts as a Native American and as an administrator of Native education programs.

- OIE and OIEP must conduct basic research: There is a dire need for additional demographic data concerning adult American Indian and Alaska Natives. At present, the Indian Health Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, the U.S. Department of Education, the U.S. Census

Bureau and other governmental agencies employ differing methods to collect and report data concerning adult Natives. Thus, it is doubtful that Native governments, federal officials or Congressional representatives have a clear understanding of the problems facing Native communities. Some of the best data exists at the local or tribal level. What is needed is a vehicle to bring the data together on a national scale. The data must include Native participation rates in state and federal Adult Basic Education, High School Completion and Vocational Training programs. The Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Labor must develop standardized evaluation instruments that reveal participant numbers as well as the success and the failure rate of adult Natives enrolled in their programs. Data collection and presentation must be standardized and the results made easily accessible to Native communities. Native governments, communities and organizations must not be left out of this process, but included in the development of common definitions as to who is a Native, who is a dropout, who is a graduate. A consensus must be arrived at as to what program evaluation and data collection methods are to be employed. And, perhaps most importantly, Native communities must be included in the proper use of the data. They must be included in the decision-making process that determines whether or not demographic data will be used to close down old programs or to enact new legislation.

- **Indian Priority System:** The Congress must change the Indian Priority System (IPS). The IPS fails to provide Native governments with meaningful input into BIA proposed Native program budgets, and this contributes to an erosion of the base budgets of many Native governments. Native governmental representatives charge that the priority system has allowed the BIA to subvert the intent of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934. The Act, which authorized the reorganization of Native governments, also promised Native governments the opportunity to comment on proposed Native program budgets prior to their inclusion in the President's Budget and submission to Congress. The promise was never kept. To compensate

the BIA developed the IPS to allow Native input into the budget process. In theory, the IPS requires the BIA to develop appropriation budgets based on the expressed program priorities of Native governments. Native leaders charge that in reality neither the proposed Bureau budgets nor Congressional allocations reflect Native priorities. A 1989 BIA report states that many Native communities believe that participating in the IPS is tantamount to participating or assisting in their own destruction (Minneapolis Area Agency IPS Review (Draft) Report). The report contends that communities hold this belief because they mistrust the actions of the Area and Central office. The report documents an example under IPS where a community established an Outdoor Recreational Management Program as a high priority and budgeted \$45,500 to the program. To further enhance the program, the tribe added \$50,500 from its Higher Education Program raising the total program budget to \$96,000. A year later the tribe was informed that the Recreational Program had been removed from the IPS and that the community's base budget had been reduced by \$96,000. Other communities have experienced similar reductions to their base funding when such programs as Housing Improvement Program, Self-Determination Grants, Roads Maintenance and Fisheries Management were taken off the IPS. The elimination or reduction of program funding is often taken, according to the report, with no advance warning to a community nor an explanation from the Central Office. The result is an erosion of tribal base budgets. The report surmises that such actions convince many tribes not to participate in the process as it is better to lose a little (through appropriation reductions) than to lose large amounts to programs taken off the IPS.

In 1989 the BIA began a review of IPS in accordance with Public Law 100-472 (Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act Amendments of 1988). The review was conducted through regional teams made up of tribal representatives and BIA staff from Agency and Area offices. Each team met and identified problems within the system and forwarded recommendations for change to the Central Office. The regional reports were assembled at the Central office and



compiled into one report. The consolidated report was to be provided to Congress with recommendations for change. As of yet no change to the IPS has occurred either at the Central office or community level.

- **Development of Model Programs:** The Kennedy report clearly cited the need for identification of model adult education programs. The recommendation has been repeated, in recent times, by the National Advisory Council on Indian Education, the National Indian Education Council, the National Indian Adult Education Association and a host of other concerned organizations and associations. Funds have been made available to pilot, evaluate and disseminate effective adult education programs through the Indian Education Act. To date, no effective program has been widely disseminated.

It is recommended that OIE develop and release a guide outlining the basic components of a standard adult education program. The guide must include funding sources, recruitment techniques, curriculum selection, instructional techniques and evaluation methods. The guide should be sent to those communities that fail to garner enough points on their Subpart 3 proposals. In addition, the Resource and Evaluation Centers should target a number of these communities each year to provide technical assistance in such areas as need assessments, program designs and evaluation methods. The next step would be for OIE to develop evaluation standards to identify effective Native adult education programs. Once identified, a detailed summary of those programs would be disseminated to Native communities.

- **Increased technical assistance to Native communities:** A major criticism of the discretionary grant process is that the majority of the awards continually go to communities most able to employ or contract with effective grant writers. This leaves communities who have great need but lack the resources to hire grant writers unable to compete. The inequity could be addressed if ED, OIE and BIA would provide these communities the technical assistance needed to complete a competitive application. Currently there is some attempt to provide such assistance through consultants hired by the Special Programs Branch of the Office of Adult and Vocational Education Programs, and by staff members of the Resource and Evaluation Centers under contract with OIE. These

efforts, however, have proved ineffective. Neither agency provides little more than handouts and brief workshops on how to develop competitive proposals.

Increased funds to tribal education departments would allow more Native communities to hire staff with the skills to assess community needs and translate those needs into a competitive proposal. An alternative method would be to increase the amount of technical assistance provided to these communities by the BIA, ED and the Resource and Evaluation Centers.

- **Support for Tribal Education Departments:** Section 1142 (a) of the Indian Education Act provides for the funding of Tribal Education Departments. The section has never been funded. Adequate funds must be devoted to this section of the law. Tribal education departments benefit Native communities by allowing for the centralization of all education programs within one office. Adequately funded departments are able to employ program administrators, program development staff and grant writers. Fully staffed departments can assess and translate the needs of their communities into education and training programs. Such fully functioning education department allow Native communities to contract with the BIA for educational programs, to compete for state and federal discretionary programs, and to provide community control over tribal education programs. Perhaps most importantly, tribal education departments offer a place for community residents to bring their hopes and fears concerning their educational future and the future of their sons and daughters. Such funding must not be limited to communities that operate contract or BIA schools but to all communities as 80 percent of the Native children attending school attend public schools.
- **BIA be required to match the Carl D. Perkins Adult Education and Vocational Act Indian set-aside:** Since 1977 Native communities and organizations have lost more than \$100 million in vocational education funds resulting from the BIA's continual refusal to match funds appropriated under the Carl D. Perkins Act Indian set-aside program. As previously stated, the funds would have done much to improve the funding opportunities for a large number of Native communities and

organizations. The Congress should either force the BIA to comply with the law or strike the provision from the Act, and replace it with another source of funding.

- Provisions for funding of Native programs within the Adult Education Act and the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act: The recent reauthorization of both Acts did not require states to identify or address the adult education or vocational needs of Native communities in the development of their state plans. States do not generally fund Native community education programs as such programs usually lack LEA status. It is recommended that each state be required to determine the level of need present within their Native communities and detail how that state plans to service the need. Such determinations would reveal the disparity between services afforded to Native communities versus those services provided to non-Native communities. A comparison of the range and character of that disparity could be used to target additional programs and funds to Native communities.
- Subpart 1 of the IEA: The current direction of IEA formula grant program has to be rethought. The basic purpose of the Act was two fold: (1) to provide public school districts with additional funding to develop programs to meet the special educational needs of Native children and (2) to include Native parents in the planning, development and maintenance of these special programs. To a moderate degree the Act has accomplished those goals. Public school districts have implemented some effective programs and Native parents have taken part in that process. The true extent of the impact of the Act, however, is undetermined. The United States Department of Education has never permitted OIE to assess the impact of the formula grant program. Overall program evaluation is either based on reports developed by LEAs or from quick and infrequent site visits conducted by OIE staff. This has allowed public school administrators to shape and control the debate concerning the effectiveness of their programs. As a result, the IEA formula grant program has not undergone any significant modification since it was enacted in 1973.

Current legislation prevents Native governments from officially participating in the decision-

making process of the formula programs. As a result, school district officials compete with lay parents to set the LEA's special program agenda. The competition is unfair. Native parents are often intimidated by the professionalism of LEA staff and fail to challenge or alter programs established by the school district. Parent committees are wholly dependent on the LEA to explain the rules and regulations governing the formula grant program. Such intimidation and dependency forces most committees to surrender their decision-making authority to the school district's perception of the education needs of the Native community. Parent committees within such environments often become non-players in the design, development and evaluation of formula programs.

Any recommendation for change must be based on the achievements of the IEA. Current data reveals that while the IEA formula grant program is not an outright failure, it has not lived up to the expectations of its designers. Native children still suffer the highest dropout rate of any American ethnic group. In comparison to other populations, Native people suffer some of the highest unemployment rates and lowest living conditions. If the IEA was designed eighteen years ago to lessen these conditions, it has failed. Change must occur.

The IEA should be amended to allow one or some combination of the following: allow Native governments that reside within a school district the first opportunity to contract for IEA formula grant funding or expand the Parent Committee membership to include Native governmental representatives.

Allowing Native communities to contract IEA formula grant programs would be in the spirit of Indian Self-Determination. It would provide Native governments with another resource to combat the educational problems within their communities. Tribal education departments could be expanded; additional funds could be used hire education counselors, tutors, and administrators. Strengthened education departments would be more able to contract BIA education programs and compete for discretionary education grants. All of this would allow Native governments to better promote the value of education to Native students, parents and families — making Native communities less dependent on outside agencies to resolve their internal problems. The change would not drastically alter IEA services. Parent committees would retain their authority to take part in program selection and development, most of IEA services would continue to be conducted during the school day and within a classroom, and school districts with significant Native populations but

lacking the residence of a Native government would continue to contract the formula grant program.

If the above recommendation is not acted upon, then IEA Parent Committee eligibility requirements must be expanded to allow Native governmental designates to become voting members. The current system requires input only from Native parents not the Native community. Adding tribal designates would enhance communications between LEAs and Native governments. As a result, the LEA would be confronted, in many cases, with a professional Native educator or administrator fully able to understand the possibilities and limitations of the formula grant program. The change would add a needed check and balance to the formula grant program.

- Subpart 3 of the IEA: To fully implement the goals of Subpart 3 of the IEA, additional funding is required, the discretionary award process must be reorganized, literacy programs must be expanded, and additional technical assistance must be provided to Native communities seeking to establish adult education programs.

The current funding level has not adequately served the *expressed* needs of Native communities and organizations as evidenced by the number of quality applications turned down each year because of a lack of funding. However, the amount of the increase cannot be determined until ED conducts research to define the width and breadth of the need for adult education programs. Recommendations that simply propose doubling or tripling Subpart 3 appropriations are welcomed, but they lack the support of need-based research and probably will not be accepted by OMB or Congress.

OIE should set aside discretionary funds to establish literacy programs. The targeted funds would provide for the establishment of low level reading and writing instructional programs. The set-aside is needed because the current systems has produced few if any IEA literacy programs.

The discretionary award process must be reviewed. In theory the current process, administered by OIE and overseen by the National Advisory Council on Indian Education, provides a statistically objective method to award grants to the best proposals. In actuality, however, the process breaks down as OIE has never been able to attract enough qualified Native readers and, at times, has failed to follow its own rules and regulations regarding the scoring method and number of readers per panel. The reading process at OIE is no different than the process required by other ED discretionary programs which probably draw the

same criticism. Therefore, it is recommended that OIE simply monitor the process closer to assure reader competency and scoring objectivity. A grievance process should be added for applicants who feel they lost the competition unfairly. Applications that fail to garner enough points to gain funding should be returned to applicants with the Reader's scores and comments. The Resource and Evaluation Centers should provide such applicants with technical assistance to strengthen their grant writing abilities.

- Support to Tribal community colleges and vocational institutions: The Adult Education Act and the Carl D. Perkins Act should be amended to include formula funding to Native colleges and vocational institutions. States should also be encouraged to develop supportive systems that would enable Native colleges and training centers to stabilize their funding base along side other state institutions.
- The United States Department of Labor, ED, OIE, OIEP, and other federal and state agencies must join forces with Native governments to enhance the economies of Native communities: It is clear that adult education and training programs function best when they are tied to expanding or stable economies. It is equally clear that such programs often fail when forced to operate in a depressed or failing economy. Employed graduates make the best recruiters; unemployed graduates spread the word that the program is a failure.

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